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CORRESPONDENCE

ON LEGISLATION FOR STERILIZATION

Dear Sir:

In response to your favor of August 9th concerning the proposed legislative act which I have modeled from the one submitted by Committee "H," I desire to mention just a few reasons which seems to me make it a coming necessity if not an immediate necessity for legislation along the line of sterilization. (For a copy of the proposed act, see page 611, this number.)

I cannot, of course, view the ever increasing physical and mental deformities and defects as does a physician, but as to the moral pervert, criminals and scummy vagabonds, the lawyer should be given a hearing, because he sees as many if not more than does the doctor.

It would make no difference in my judgment if medical skill should fail to prove that the tendency to crime is inheritable; not one criminal out of ten can raise a large family (and their families are most always at large) without each child learning from, and imitating its father; and in all probability surpassing his father in cussedness. Whether he learns it or whether he inherits it from his parent matters nothing; the fact remains that he *has* it.

One thing that leads me to favor sterilization of certain classes, is, that the people of the state and nation are demanding that something be done to check the rapid increase of the insane, feeble-minded and degenerate persons. They watch with alarm the number multiply and in their anxiety to discover a preventative become easy dupes to wild and dangerous theories, a sample of which is to concede the attending physician the privilege of selecting between life and death of an innocent new born.

The people of this country know they need relief and if the brains of the proper departments do not formulate and furnish the correct path to that end, they will stampede the Devil's lane in an attempt to get there.

The crime of the age was committed only last winter in Chicago by the negative killing of the Bollinger infant; yet no doubt Dr. Haiselden and half the population of Illinois who praised the horrible torture of this little one fighting for life, dear to it as to the writer, while all the bystanders boosted for death, actually thought they were serving society, instead of staggering it by destroying the conscience of which society is made.

The prosecuting attorney reported he would be unable to punish Dr. Haiselden. Why? It is a crime forbidden our statute to willfully permit a human being to perish. The prosecuting attorney knew that a jury made up of people who were praising Dr. Haiselden would never convict him. Therefore, it became useless to prosecute. The people have not as yet found a right way to prevent the increase of delinquents and it leaves the bars down for quacks and men of ill responsibilities to grow famous through the pleasant process of bulldozing.

No one man has a right to consult his own feelings and decide who shall continue to live and who shall die. When kings had this power the doctors were the rain-makers, shaking bean bags at the moon and chanting hocus-pocus to the evil spirits. Their progress in the last century is a marvel of achievements almost beyond belief; and every citizen should be ready to aid and encourage them. Help them to rid their profession of the individuals who bring shame upon it, and permit them to rid this race of people of a major per cent of the feeble-minded, inebriate and criminalistic creatures from among the coming generation. Segregation must fail; eugenic marriage laws is only the first step; sterilization will make itself felt for the great good of the race, and when people learn to understand it, it will meet with their favor.

Thanking you for the opportunity afforded me for expressing my personal views upon the above subject, I remain,

Very respectfully yours,

W. F. GRAY,
Clinton, Ill., August 15, 1916.

THE PUBLIC DEFENDER: DUTY TO FURNISH TECHNICAL DEFENSE

In answer to those who advocate a Public Defender, obviously in imitation of Los Angeles, the writer begs to ask:

Has any other nation constitutional provisions, which the courts of last resort characterize as "a shelter to the guilty," which "has no place in the jurisprudence of civilized and free countries outside the domain of the common law, and is nowhere observed among our own people in the search for truth outside the administration of the law" (*Twining v. New Jersey*, 211 U. S. 91, 113), or as "the privilege of crime" (*State v. Kentworth*, 65 Maine, 241)?